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CHILDREN'S
CAPACITY

To Receive
Religious Instructions,

And of the *Manner how*
To give them such Instructions:

Together with
PRAYERS

Adapted to the Capacities and Use of
CHILDREN:

Design'd more Particularly for the
Children of *Bloody Parish.*

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Of CHILDREN's Capacity
to receive Religious Instruction, and
of the Manner how to give them
such Instructions : Together with
Prayers adapted to the Capacities and
Use of CHILDREN, &c.

IT ought to be the Chief Care and Concern of Parents for their Children, To bring Them up in the Knowledge and Practice of their Duty to GOD : Not only because This is Indispensably required of Parents by GOD, for the Neglect of which they will be judg'd at the Last Day ; but also because it is really the far Greatest Kindness that they can do their Children, it being the Only way to procure GOD's Favour to their Children in this World, and Eternal Happiness to Them in the World to come.

In order hereto it is Advisable and Requisite for Parents to *begin to instruct* their Children by Little and Little in the Knowledge of GOD, as soon as Ever their Children *begin to be Capable* to receive any such Instructions. There seems to be a general mistake of Parents in thinking Children *Not so soon* Capable of any Religious Instructions, as they *Really* are ; which Mistake is

of very Ill Consequence, forasmuch at the Longer it is before Childrens Minds are season'd with such Notions of Religion as they are Capable of, the More time there is given for their Natural Corruption to get Strength, and so for their Minds to become more Averse to receiving Religious Instructions, when given them.

As soon as a Child begins to have an Apprehension of his *Father*, as One that Loves him in a peculiar manner, and will Love him More and More if he be Good, or Do as he should; but will be Angry with him and Punish him, if he be Naughty, or will Not do as he should: So soon the said Child begins to be Capable of receiving some Notions of GOD; namely, as of his *Father* in the Highest or Truest Sense; who (tho' He be in Heaven or Above, yet sees and takes Notice of All that he does; and) as he Loves him Already, so will Love him More and More, and Reward him, More than his *Father* which he sees, can Reward him, if he do well, or as his said *Father* in Heaven would have him; but if he do Ill, or does Not do as his said Heavenly *Father* would have him, then his said Heavenly *Father* will be very Angry with him, and Punish him much more severely than his *Father* here on Earth can punish him.

In like manner as soon as a Child begins to Apprehend, What a *Master* is, What a *Governour* or *Lord* or *King*; so soon he begins to be Capable of receiving those Other Notions of GOD, namely as the Chief *Master*, Supream *Governour* or *Lord* or *King* of the whole World.

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As a Child does by Degrees apprehend More and More the *Things of this World*, so he becomes more and more Capable of receiving suitable Notions of *Things relating to the World to come*. Thus for instance: As a Child becomes more and more apprehensive of the *Pleasures, Glory, and Riches* of this World; so he becomes thereby more and more Capable of receiving such Religious Notions, as relate to the *Pleasures, Glory, and Riches* of the other World or Heaven: Which Infinitely exceeding the Pleasures, Glory and Riches of this present World, therefore ought to be Infinitely more Valued, and sought for by Him; even so as to part with All things here on Earth in order to secure unto Himself the Enjoyment of Heaven.

Likewise as soon as a Child becomes Apprehensive of the *Pain* or *Punishment* he is liable to in this World, and particularly of the great Pain arising from being *Burnt with Fire*; so soon He becomes Capable of such Religious Apprehensions, as relate to the *Pains* of the *Damned*, and particularly the *Torments of Hell Fire*: Which being Infinitely Greater than any Pain or Punishment in this World, He is to Dread above All things here below, and to Do or Suffer any thing here, rather than be Damned or Cast into Hell-Fire hereafter.

Lastly, as soon as a Child hath the foregoing Apprehensions, He thereby becomes Capable of having also Religious Apprehensions of our Blessed *Saviour Jesus Christ*, as One that will *save* him from Hell, and reward him with Heaven, if He will please and obey him. And on

the other hand the said Child becomes also Capable of Apprehending, what an Enemy the *Devil* is to him, inasmuch as he seeks to deprive him of Heaven, and to destroy him in Hell.

As These are the Primary and Fundamental Notions of Religion, so I doubt not but upon due Trial it will be found, that Children which have a Right use of their Natural Faculties, become Capable of receiving All the forementioned Religious Notions, as soon as they are *Three or Four Years of Age*. And yet how Rare is it to meet with any Children of that Age, that have had these Notions instill'd into them? How void of these Religious Notions is the Generality of Children, even when they are *Double* the forementioned Age! The very Ill Consequences of which Delay I have above observ'd.

Having thus briefly shewn, *how soon* Children become Capable of Religious Instruction; and *after what manner* Religious Notions may be instilled or put by degrees into their Tender Minds; I now proceed to set down several *Forms of Prayer* to be used by Children according to their several Years and Capacities. Only too what has been already said concerning Childrens Capacity to receive Religious Instructions, let me add this; that a Child once having an Apprehension of GOD as his *Father*, is thereby render'd Capable of Apprehending his Duty to *pray* to GOD for whatever he stands in need of.

As soon therefore as a Child can speak so well, as to say Readily himself what he hears Another say before him; let the Parent be Careful to make

make the said Child as soon as He is Dress'd, to *Kneel down Reverently*, and say after the said Parent (till the Child can remember to say of Himself) thus *Every Morning*.

Heavenly Father, bless Me This Day and All my Life.

Likewise *Every Night* before the Child is Undress'd, let him *Kneel down Reverently*, and say after the Parent or by Himself thus :

Heavenly Father, bless Me this Night and All my Life.

As the Child's Memory increases, so let him increase his Prayers, by using instead of the fore-mention'd shortest Forms, these which follow next; Always *Kneeling Reverently* whilst He is saying his Prayers, whether at Morning or Night.

MORNING PRAYER.

O God, Heavenly Father, *bless Me This Day and give Me Grace to live as Thy Child, All the Days of my Life, thro' Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour Amen.*

Bless also my Father, and Mother &c. (naming Brothers and Sisters, according as He has) for Christ his sake Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

O God, Heavenly Father, *bless me This Night, and give me Grace to live as thy Child All the Days of my Life, thro' Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Bless also my Father and Mother (&c.) for Christ his sake. Amen.

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Let the Child use One of these (or the like) short Forms of Prayer, till he can say the *Lord's Prayer*; which let Him be taught as soon as possible, by letting him learn or Commit to Memory the several Parts of It by Degrees; to which purpose the several Petitions and Parts of the said Lord's Prayer are here set down severally, and in such manner as it is Proper for them to be severally learnt.

OUR Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name:

Thy Kingdom come:

Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven:

Give us this Day our Daily Bread:

And forgive us Our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespas against Us:

And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

When the Child can say the Lord's Prayer perfectly, let him say it Every Morning and Evening, either instead of or with the last foregoing Form. Always Kneeling Reverently while he says it.

Then let the Child begin to learn the Church-Catechism; and as soon as He can perfectly say the three First Answers therein, then let him Use the following Prayers Morning and Evening, Reverently Kneeling All the while.

MORNING PRAYER.

O God our Heavenly Father, I heartily thank thee for all the Mercies vouchsafed unto Me the Night past, but more especially that thou
hast

hast called me to the State of Salvation thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray Thee to give me thy Grace, that I may continue in the same unto my Life's End.

To which end give me Grace to Renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pumps and Vanities of this Wicked World, and all the Sinful Lusts of the Flesh: To believe All the Articles of the Christian Faith: And to keep thy Holy Will and Commandments, and to Walk in the same this Day and all the Days of my Life: That so living here as becomes a Member of Christ, and a Child of God; I may after this Life ended be actually made an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

I beseech thee also, O Heavenly Father, to bless my Father and Mother [Brothers and Sisters] and all Mankind, for the sake and thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour; in whose Words I sum up all the Graces and Blessings we stand in need of: Our Father which art in Heaven &c.

EVENING PRAYER.

O God our Heavenly Father, I heartily thank Thee for all the Mercies vouchsafed unto Me the Day past; but more especially that Thou hast call'd Me to the State of Salvation thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray Thee to give me thy Grace, that I may continue in the same unto my Life's end.

To which end give me Grace to Renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pumps and Vanities of this Wicked World, and all the Sinful Lusts

Lusts of the Flesh : To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith : And to keep thy Holy Will and Commandments, and to Walk in the same All the Days of my Life.

I beseech thee also, O Heavenly Father, to preserve Me, my Father and Mother (&c.) from the Perils and Dangers of this Night ; and to refresh us with such Rest and Sleep, as that we may rise the next Morning more Fit for thy Service. All which I beg for the Sake and thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour ; in whose Words I sum up All the Graces and Blessings We and All Mankind stand in need of : Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

Some One of the foregoing Forms of Prayer will serve *Children* from their becoming First Capable to say any Prayers till they come to be about *Twelve* or *Fourteen* Years of Age. By which Time as their Natural Faculties are generally much enlarg'd or improv'd, so likewise by the Help of a due Religious Education will their Apprehensions of Religious Matters be much enlarg'd : And therefore it is Proper and Requisite, that Young Persons, when they come to that Age should likewise enlarge their Devotions in a suitable manner. To which end I purpose (God willing) to draw up some Forms of Prayers suitable for the Use of Young Persons, from *Twelve* or *Fourteen* Years of Age to *One* and *Twenty*, or till they come to Manhood or the Ripeness of their Faculties. Which Prayers shall be Printed in the like manner and size of Volume as These, that so they may be either Charitably given the More to Common and the Poorer sort of People ; or else may be the more easily procur'd by Them themselves.

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It remains to observe here to Parents, that they are to take special Heed, not only that their Children *duly or constantly say* every Morning and Night some One of the foregoing Forms of Prayers as is most suitable to their Age; but also that they say their Prayers *Reverently, Decently Kneeling* All the while, *Not lolling on their Elbows*, much less *lying along in their Beds*: For whosoever will *serve God Acceptably*, must *serve him with Reverence and Godly Fear*, (as we are taught in *Hebrews 12. 28.*) that is, with such a Fear and Reverence as is suitable to the *Supream Majesty of GOD.*

On the same Account; as it is Advisable and Requisite for Parents Not to bring their Children to Church, till they are become Capable of being taught and made to behave themselves there *Reverently or Decently*; so when they are become Capable of so doing, it is the Duty of Parents Not to let them stay at Home, but to bring them to Church, and to take great Care that they do behave themselves there *Reverently or Decently*; and to that end as soon as they to come their Seat or Place, do kneel down and say this short Prayer:

O Lord God, give me Grace to serve Thee Acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear, Now and Always, for Christs his sake. Amen.

After which it is the Duty of Parents to take Care, that their Children (when they can read) read *Decently* such Parts of the Common Prayer as the People are to join in till they can *say them without Book*, and also read (with the Eye, notwithstanding the Mouth or so as to be heard, and there.

thereby disturb the Congregation,) the *Lessons* and other *Portions of Holy Scripture* made use of in the Publick Service.

Lastly, it is the Duty of Parents to teach their Children to say *Grace* before and after their Meals; and to take Care that they actually do say *Grace* Themselves, when there is No one else that says it for Them among Others.

Grace before Meat.

Bless these thy Creatures, O Lord, to my (or Our) Use, and me (or Us) to thy Service, for Christ his sake. Amen.

Grace after Meat.

FOR these and All other his Mercies, GOD's Holy Name be prais'd, Now and for Ever. Amen.

Thus I have Briefly laid together such Instructions and Prayers, as seem Requiste for Children, or Younger Persons till they come to be Twelve or Fourteen Years of Age. And I doubt not but such Parents as take Care that their Children practise accordingly, will find GOD's Blessing on their Children in the due Practice thereof. Amen, Gracious Lord, for Christ his sake. Amen.

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